

REMARKS

By way of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Claims 1-18 have been amended to delete the multiple dependencies and to replace the words "characterized in that" and "in that" with the word "wherein".

It is requested that the application be examined on the basis of the claims as amended.

Early and favorable consideration with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

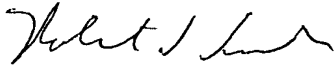
Should any questions arise in connection with this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: January 30, 2004

By: _____


Robert S. Swecker
Registration No. 19,885

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620